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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 11 September 2017

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/71/L.88 and Add.1)*]

71/326. Tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the intrinsic value of biological diversity and its various contributions to sustainable development and human well-being, and recognizing that wild fauna and flora in their many beautiful and varied forms are an irreplaceable part of the natural systems of the Earth which must be protected for this generation and the generations to come,

Remaining concerned, therefore, about the increasing scale of poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products and its adverse economic, social and environmental impacts,

Expressing serious concern over the extraordinarily detrimental levels of rhinoceros poaching and the alarmingly high levels of killings of elephants in Africa, as well as the illegal trade in other protected wildlife species, including but not limited to reptiles, tortoises, marine and freshwater turtles, sharks, ornamental fish, pangolins, great apes, parrots, raptors, the helmeted hornbill and big cats, which threaten those species with local extinction and, in some cases, with global extinction,

Underlining the need to take measures to prevent illegal timber harvesting, which leads to the decimation of rare timber species, in particular of rosewood, agarwood and sandalwood,

Recognizing that illicit trafficking in wildlife contributes to damage to ecosystems and rural livelihoods, including those based on ecotourism, undermines good governance and the rule of law and, in some cases, threatens national stability and requires enhanced transnational and regional cooperation and coordination in response,

Emphasizing that the protection of wildlife must be part of a comprehensive approach to achieving poverty eradication, food security, sustainable development, including the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, economic growth, social well-being and sustainable livelihoods,

Reaffirming its call for holistic and integrated approaches to sustainable development that will guide humanity to live in harmony with nature and lead to efforts to restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem, which will contribute the creation of a shared future based upon our common humanity,

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Recognizing with concern the growth in online trade and cybercrime in the context of illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, which require innovative strategies and increased intergovernmental cooperation, as appropriate,

Concerned about the use of forged or illegally issued permits and certificates or the fraudulent use of authentic permits and certificates in order to misuse domestic legal markets to mask trade in illegally obtained wildlife or wildlife products, or to launder such illegally obtained wildlife or wildlife products,

Recognizing the legal framework provided by and the important role of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora[1] as the primary mechanism for regulating international trade in species of wild fauna and flora listed in its appendices, and in this regard welcoming the relevant resolutions and decisions adopted at the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 24 September to 5 October 2016,

Recognizing also the importance of other multilateral environmental agreements, including the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals,[2] the Convention on Biological Diversity,[3] the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage[4] and the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat,[5]

Reaffirming its resolutions 69/314 of 30 July 2015 and 70/301 of 9 September 2016 on tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife,

Reaffirming also its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", by which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/40 of 25 July 2013 on crime prevention and criminal justice responses to illicit trafficking in protected species of wild fauna and flora, in which the Council encouraged Member States to make illicit trafficking in protected species of wild fauna and flora involving organized criminal groups a serious crime,

Reaffirming that the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime[6] and the United Nations Convention against Corruption[7] constitute effective tools and an important part of the legal framework for international cooperation in fighting illicit trafficking in endangered species of wild fauna and flora,

Bearing in mind that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons could be linked to illicit trafficking in wildlife, which may pose a serious threat to national and regional stability in some parts of Africa,

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[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 993, No. 14537.

[2] Ibid., vol. 1651, No. 28395.

[3] Ibid., vol. 1760, No. 30619.

[4] Ibid., vol. 1037, No. 15511.

[5] Ibid., vol. 996, No. 14583.

[6] Ibid., vol. 2225, No. 39574.

[7] Ibid., vol. 2349, No. 42146.

Recognizing the important work of the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime, a collaborative effort of the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the World Bank and the World Customs Organization, by, inter alia, providing technical assistance to Member States,

Welcoming resolution 2/14 of 27 May 2016 of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, on the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products,[8]

Welcoming also the efforts of and cooperation between Member States, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, as well as activities of United Nations agencies and other entities, aimed at preventing and fighting illicit trafficking in wildlife, and in this regard taking note of the Paris Declaration of 2013, the London Declaration of 2014, the Kasane Statement of 2015, the Brazzaville Declaration of 2015 and the Hanoi Statement of 2016,

Recalling its resolution 68/205 of 20 December 2013, in which it proclaimed 3 March, the day of the adoption of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, as World Wildlife Day, and welcoming the international observance of the Day since 2014 in order to celebrate and raise awareness of the world's wild fauna and flora,

Welcoming the high-level thematic discussion on the global observance of World Wildlife Day, held on 3 March 2017, which focused on tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife and protecting wild fauna and flora, as well as on the role of youth in protecting wildlife,

Recalling its resolution 71/206 of 19 December 2016 on follow-up to the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and preparations for the Fourteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and taking note of the importance of the Doha Declaration on Integrating Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice into the Wider United Nations Agenda to Address Social and Economic Challenges and to Promote the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels, and Public Participation, adopted by the Thirteenth Congress,[9]

Reaffirming the role of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice as the principal policymaking body of the United Nations for crime prevention and criminal justice matters,

Taking note of the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the eleventh session of the United Nations Forum on Forests on the international arrangement on "The forests we want: beyond 2015"[10] and of the resolution on the international arrangement on forests beyond 2015,[11] adopted by the Forum at its eleventh session,

Taking note also of the *World Wildlife Crime Report: Trafficking in protected species*, prepared by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in 2016,[12]

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[8] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventy-first Session, Supplement No. 25* (A/71/25), annex.

[9] Resolution 70/174, annex.

[10] Economic and Social Council decision 2015/254.

[11] Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/33.

[12] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.16.XI.9.

1. *Stresses its determination* to implement fully and without delay the commitments undertaken in its resolutions 69/314 and 70/301;

2. *Recognizes* the economic, social and environmental impacts of illicit trafficking in wildlife, where firm and strengthened action needs to be taken on both the supply and the demand sides, and re-emphasizes the importance, in this regard, of effective international cooperation among Member States, relevant multilateral environmental agreements and international organizations;

3. *Encourages* Member States to adopt effective measures to prevent and counter the serious problem of crimes that have an impact on the environment, such as illicit trafficking in wildlife and wildlife products, including fauna and flora as protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora,[1] and poaching;

4. *Urges* Member States to take decisive steps at the national level to prevent, combat and eradicate the illegal trade in wildlife, on both the supply and the demand sides, including by strengthening their legislation and regulations necessary for the prevention, investigation, prosecution and appropriate punishment of such illegal trade, as well as by strengthening enforcement and criminal justice responses, and to increase the exchange of information and knowledge among national authorities as well as among Member States and international crime authorities, in accordance with national legislation and international law, acknowledging that the International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime can provide valuable technical assistance in this regard, including through supporting Member States in the implementation of the Wildlife and Forest Crime Analytic Toolkit, which is aimed at strengthening, where appropriate, the capacity of relevant law enforcement authorities and judiciaries in investigating, prosecuting and adjudicating wildlife-related offences;

5. *Calls upon* Member States to make illicit trafficking in protected species of wild fauna and flora a serious crime, in accordance with their national legislation and as defined in article 2 (*b*) and article 3, paragraph 1 (*b*), of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime,[6] in order to ensure that, where the offence is transnational in nature and involves an organized criminal group, effective international cooperation can be afforded under the Convention to prevent and combat transnational organized crime;

6. *Encourages* Member States to utilize article II, paragraph 3, of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora by listing in its appendix III protected species in their jurisdiction that may become threatened as a result of international trade, and urges Member States to provide assistance in controlling the trade in those species protected under the Convention, including those listed in appendix III;

7. *Calls upon* Member States to review and amend national legislation, as necessary and appropriate, so that offences connected to the illegal trade in wildlife are treated as predicate offences, as defined in the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, for the purposes of domestic money-laundering offences and are actionable under domestic proceeds of crime legislation, and so that assets linked to illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products can be seized, confiscated and disposed of;

8. *Encourages* Member States to make use, to the greatest extent possible, of legal instruments available at the national level to tackle illicit trafficking in wildlife, including through legislation related to money-laundering, corruption, fraud, racketeering and financial crime;

9. *Also encourages* Member States to harmonize their judicial, legal and administrative regulations to support the exchange of evidence regarding and criminal prosecution of illicit trafficking in wildlife, as well as to establish national-level inter-agency wildlife crime task forces and facilitate the exchange of evidence between the different government agencies, to the extent consistent with national legislation;

10. *Further encourages* Member States to enhance their enforcement efforts, including through recording and monitoring both seizures and successful prosecutions, in order to more effectively counter and deter the illegal trade in wildlife;

11. *Urges* Member States to engage actively in efforts to raise awareness about and address the problems and risks associated with the supply and transit of and demand for illegal wildlife products, including by improving cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, engaging consumer groups and tackling the drivers of demand, and to more effectively reduce the demand, including by using targeted and evidence-based strategies in order to influence consumer behaviour and create greater awareness of laws prohibiting illegal trade in wildlife and associated penalties;

12. *Invites* Member States to enhance the ability of developing countries to tackle illicit trafficking in wildlife, and in particular to enhance their implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, by, inter alia, providing financial or technical assistance, supporting efforts to access funding through the Global Environment Facility and providing financial and in-kind resources for capacity-building activities required in this regard, including in the implementation of the resolutions and decisions adopted at the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;

13. *Encourages* Member States to promote sustainable development in its three dimensions in an innovative, coordinated, environmentally sound, open and shared manner, which requires a comprehensive approach to protect wild fauna and flora and to combat, with determination, the illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products;

14. *Also encourages* Member States to increase the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities, including from their local wildlife resources, and eradicate poverty, by promoting, inter alia, innovative partnerships for conserving wildlife through shared management responsibilities, including community conservancies, public-private partnerships, sustainable tourism, revenue-sharing agreements and other income sources, such as sustainable agriculture;

15. *Further encourages* Member States to integrate measures to address illegal trade in wildlife into development policy and planning and the programming of development cooperation activities, and to further raise public awareness among individuals and communities to live sustainably in a world in which wildlife and other living species are protected;

16. *Calls upon* Member States to initiate or strengthen collaborative partnerships among local, regional, national and international development and conservation agencies so as to enhance support for community-led wildlife conservation and to promote the retention of benefits by local communities for the conservation and sustainable management of wildlife;

17. *Strongly encourages* Member States to enhance their support, including through transnational and regional cooperation, for the development of sustainable and, as appropriate, alternative livelihoods for communities affected by illicit trafficking in wildlife and its adverse impacts, with the full engagement of the communities in and adjacent to wildlife habitats as active partners in conservation and sustainable use, enhancing the rights and capacity of the members of such communities to manage and benefit from wildlife and wilderness;

18. *Also strongly encourages* Member States to participate in global, regional and national donor coordination and knowledge-sharing efforts to enhance understanding and mobilization of bilateral, multilateral and private investments to prevent and combat illegal trade in wildlife in order to collectively maximize investment effectiveness and engage new partners;

19. *Urges* Member States that have not yet done so to consider taking measures to ratify or accede to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption,[7] and calls upon parties to take appropriate measures to ensure the effective implementation of their obligations under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and other relevant multilateral agreements, including by applying the agreed international guidelines established by the latter Convention for the storage, stockpiling and disposal of illicit wildlife products and contraband, as well as to consider ways to share information with one another on best practices to tackle illicit trafficking in wildlife in line with those instruments;

20. *Calls upon* Member States to prohibit, prevent and counter any form of corruption that facilitates illicit trafficking in wildlife and wildlife products, including by assessing and mitigating corruption risks in their technical assistance and capacity-building programmes related to wildlife, by strengthening their capacity to investigate and by prosecuting such corruption, calls upon parties to implement all relevant resolutions and decisions adopted at the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and requests the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to continue to support Member States in this regard, upon their request;

21. *Also calls upon* Member States to ensure that legal domestic markets for wildlife products are not used to mask the trade in illegal wildlife products, and in this regard urges parties to implement the decision adopted at the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora recommending that all Governments close legal domestic ivory markets, as a matter of urgency, if these markets contribute to poaching or illegal trade;[13]

22. *Encourages* Member States to take measures making permit systems more resilient to corruption and to take advantage of modern information and communications technologies for improved control of international trade in protected species of wild fauna and flora in order to prevent the use of fraudulent documents in the international trade in protected species;

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[13] See resolution Conf. 10.10 (Rev. CoP17) on trade in elephant specimens.

23. *Recognizes* the efforts of the Group of 20 in countering corruption at both the global and the national levels, takes note with appreciation of the work at its summits held in Hangzhou, China, in 2016, and in Hamburg, Germany, in 2017, as well as its development of High-level Principles on Combatting Corruption Related to Illegal Trade in Wildlife and Wildlife Products, and urges the Group to continue to engage other States Members of the United Nations and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in its work in an inclusive and transparent manner;

24. *Also recognizes* the efforts of the African Union to prevent and reduce, with a view to eliminating, the illegal exploitation of and illegal trade in wild fauna and flora in Africa in a common coordinated response;

25. *Strongly encourages* Member States, in line with Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/40, to cooperate at the bilateral, regional and international levels to prevent, combat and eradicate international illicit trafficking in wildlife and wildlife products through, inter alia, the use of international legal instruments such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption;

26. *Encourages* Member States, where relevant and appropriate, to enhance cooperation for the timely and cost-efficient repatriation of live illegally traded wildlife, including eggs, consistent with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, and also, where relevant and appropriate, to enhance information-sharing among national and international authorities on the seizure of illegally traded wildlife and wildlife products in order to facilitate follow-up investigation and prosecution;

27. *Calls upon* United Nations organizations, within their respective mandates and in line with Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/40, to continue to support efforts by Member States to fight illicit trafficking in wildlife, such as through capacity-building and by supporting alternative livelihoods, and to improve cooperation with all relevant stakeholders in order to facilitate a holistic and comprehensive approach by the international community;

28. *Requests*, in this regard, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, within its mandate and resources, in line with Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/40 and in close cooperation and collaboration with Member States, to continue and to strengthen the collection of information on patterns and flows of illicit trafficking in wildlife and to report thereon biennially;

29. *Requests* the Secretary-General to further improve the coordination of activities undertaken by the specialized agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system relating to the scope of the present resolution, within their respective mandates and in line with Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/40;

30. *Also requests* the Secretary-General, taking into account Economic and Social Council resolution 2013/40, to report to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session on the global status of illicit trafficking in wildlife, including poaching and illegal trade, and on the implementation of the present resolution, and to make proposals for possible future action, including consideration of the appointment of a special envoy to promote awareness and galvanize international action;

31. *Decides* to revisit the issue and the implementation of the present resolution on a biennial basis, beginning at its seventy-third session.

97th plenary meeting
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